

VICTORIES ON THE SUTLEJ.

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THE SPEECHES

OF THE

RT. HON. SIR ROBERT PEEL, BT.,

ON MOVING THE

THANKS OF THE HOUSE

TO

THE ARMY ON THE SUTLEJ,

FOR THE VICTORIES

OF

MOODKEE, FEROZESHAH, ALIWAL,  
AND SOBRAON.

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IN THE

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

*Monday, March 2nd, and Thursday, April 2nd, 1846.*

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EXTRACTED FROM

HANSARD'S PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES,

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## THANKS TO THE ARMY IN INDIA.

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### VICTORIES OF MOODKEE AND FERÖZESHÄH.

SIR R. PEEL rose and took his stand at the Table, when

Mr. BRIGHT interposed, and begged leave to present a petition. We understood it to be from Reading, and to pray that the House would not vote thanks to the Indian army, as the troops were engaged in an unjust and impolitic warfare.

SIR R. PEEL then spoke as follows: I am about to propose that one of the highest rewards that can be bestowed upon successful valour shall be conferred by this House. I am about to propose that the Thanks of the Commons of this great Empire shall be given to the officers and men who recently on the banks of the Sutlej, under very trying circumstances, by their discipline, by their fortitude, by their brilliant valour, have sustained the reputation of their country, and proved themselves worthy of the service to which they belong. And I was prepared, until I was interrupted by the hon. Gentleman the Member for the city of Durham, to believe that it would be impossible that any body of Englishmen could be found, who, seeing what were the circumstances of unprovoked aggression which called forth the exertions of these gallant men—seeing what, in a just cause, was their devotion to the interests of their country—would sign a petition grudging the grateful acknowledgment of courage and devotion which we propose to offer. (Much cheering.)

The Resolutions with which I shall conclude will not touch upon any matter of purely political concern, but are framed in conformity with established usage—that usage being consonant with reason and justice. The Resolutions will be confined to the acknowledgment of military skill, ability, and valour; and those who may be disposed, if any there be, to question

the policy of the Indian Government, will not be in the slightest degree compromised by giving a ready acquiescence in the Motion I shall submit. However convinced I may be of the justice, the moderation, and the wisdom which have characterized the conduct of my gallant Friend the Governor General, yet I shall studiously abstain, in the observations which I make, from any reference to matters of public policy, excepting such as is necessary to elucidate the military operations which are the subject of the Resolutions I shall move. With the position, with the Government, with the population of the Sikh territory, we have become familiar through events that have occurred within the last few years. The state of the country and the history of the Punjaub are probably well known to all whom I am addressing, from the relation in which we stood towards it, during our operations in the neighbouring country of Afghanistan. The House is probably well aware that by the ability and energy of an individual (Runjeet Sing) supremacy was established by him in the Punjaub; and that for many years, through that ability and energy, he ruled the destinies of that great country, and kept in subjection and subordination a powerful army. Since his death, which took place in the year 1839, the Government of the Punjaub has presented a series of acts of cruelty, of intrigue, of a rapid succession of governors, in consequence of the murder of the predecessor by the successor; it has exhibited a picture of licentiousness and debauchery so extravagant, that it might be calculated to provoke a smile if it were not for the influence such licentiousness and debauchery must exercise over the welfare of millions. The acts of that Government have been mainly directed by that powerful soldiery over which Runjeet Sing established his sway; but which since his death has been in the constant habit of controlling the conduct of the civil authorities, and even of the military commanders, by repeated acts of insubordination, and repeated murders, for the purpose of extorting increased pay. Perhaps the best idea one can give of the anomalous condition of affairs, and of the difficulties of speculating upon any acts that may be committed, or upon any measure that may be resorted to is this—that it is quite clear that the main object of the go-

vernors of that country, and of the principal landed proprietors and chiefs, has been to provoke collision with the British army, not for the purpose of resenting any wrong, or of sustaining the military reputation of their country, but of freeing themselves from subjection to an insubordinate and licentious force, by provoking a conflict with Great Britain, in which that force should fall a sacrifice. That has been the main object, and the strange principle of public policy, that has for some time guided the decisions and regulated the acts of the rulers of the Punjaub.

I well know what was the object of my Friend, Sir Henry Hardinge, in undertaking the government of India. He made great sacrifices from a sense of public duty; my gallant Friend held a prominent place in the Councils of Her Majesty: he was, I believe, without any reference to party divisions, held in general esteem in this House, as well by his political opponents as by his political friends. He was regarded by the army of this country as its friend, because he was the friend of justice to all ranks of that army. It was proposed to him at a time of life, when, perhaps, ambition is a less powerful stimulus than it might have been at an earlier period—it was proposed to him to relinquish his place in the Councils of his Sovereign—to forego the satisfaction he must have felt at what he could not fail to see, that he was an object of general respect and esteem. He separated himself from that family which constituted the chief happiness of his life, for the purpose of performing a public duty he owed to his Sovereign and his country, by taking the arduous and responsible situation of Chief Governor of our Indian possessions. He went out with a high military reputation, solicitous to establish his fame in connexion with our Indian Empire, not by means of conquest, or the exhibition of military skill and valour, but by obtaining for himself a name in the annals of India, as the friend of peace, and through the promotion of the social interests and welfare of the inhabitants. It was mainly on account of the military character and high reputation of my gallant Friend that he was enabled to control and keep in check the aspirations of more ardent and impetuous minds bent upon the invasion and conquest of the Punjaub.

The view which my gallant Friend took of the policy to be pursued in regard to the Punjaub, was shortly this: he thought the dominions of the British Crown in India were sufficient for every purpose—that the interests of the Empire would not be promoted by the addition of the Punjaub to the possessions already subject to our own rule. He was determined, therefore, to resist any temptation to territorial aggrandizement. His desire was to see a native Government established in the Panjaub, capable of maintaining its independence, of restoring subordination in the ranks of a great army, composed of men of high natural courage, of great physical strength, accustomed to discipline, and trained to military habits by European officers of distinguished reputation. His wish was, that a Sikh Government should be established. He deprecated the formation of a Mussulman Government, or the domination of any other than Sikh authorities. At the same time that he was determined to resist the temptations to direct aggression, he refused repeated proposals that were made to him to interfere in the domestic affairs of the Punjaub. Although nothing could have been more easy; although but a word from him would have been necessary to induce the Mussulman inhabitants of the Punjaub to rise against the Sikh authorities, who were conducting themselves in a manner so irreconcilable with sound policy or common sense, he resolved steadily to adhere to the line he had chalked out; to abstain from all interference in the domestic affairs of the Punjaub; and to observe literally every obligation of good faith.

But while that was his view of the policy that ought to be pursued, he was not insensible to the danger to which our Indian Empire was constantly exposed from the maintenance on its frontier of a profligate and debauched Government, controlled by an insubordinate and licentious army. My gallant Friend, therefore, took all precautions. He had to guard a frontier extending on the banks of the Sutlej at least 100 miles. The frontier from Ferozepore to Roopur was at least 100 miles; from Ferozepore to Loodiana about 77 miles. My gallant Friend, cautiously abstaining from the collection of any force on the frontier which could justify aggression, or even remonstrance, on the part of the Lahore Government,

took those precautions which would effectually prevent successful attack on their part. At Ferozepore he stationed a force of about 8,000 men, consisting of one European regiment, seven regiments of native infantry, two regiments of native cavalry, twenty-four light guns, and had mounted in position at Ferozepore thirty or thirty-five pieces of heavy artillery. He intended this to be the advanced post of the British army on the western side of the frontier. At a distance of about seventy-six miles to the eastward, higher up the Sutlej, at Loodiana, he collected a force of about 5,000 men. My gallant Friend thought that these two armies, or two divisions of an army, stationed about seventy-six miles from each other, acting on the flanks of any force from the Punjaub, induced by caprice or by the temerity of their rulers to invade the British territory, would be sufficient to keep it in effectual control. At a distance more in the interior, namely, at Umballah, he stationed another division of 7,500 men at the least. My gallant Friend was undoubtedly under the impression that it was highly improbable that any attack would be made by the army of the Punjaub upon the British positions. He knew that no conduct on his part could provoke or justify such an attack; and he felt every assurance that could be felt, so far as justice and reason sanctioned the inference, that the army of the Punjaub would not be mad enough to seek a conflict with the British forces on the left bank of the Sutlej.

There were good reasons why my gallant Friend did not keep together for the last two or three years an immense British and native army on the banks of the Sutlej. Constant efforts were made by the Government and by the military leaders of the army of the Punjaub to corrupt our native troops. The constitution of the army of the Punjaub is purely democratic: the private soldiers elect representatives, five in number from each company, to control their officers, to depose them when they think fit, or to subject them to death when it is deemed expedient. The pay of an infantry soldier of the Punjaub is about 25s. a month; while the pay of a Sepoy in Her Majesty's service is only about 14s. or 15s. a month. Constant exertions were made, by direct and indirect means,

aided by community of language and of religion, to shake the fidelity of the native troops; but I rejoice to say that they were made without success. The loyalty of the sepoy, with scarcely a single exception, has been untainted. All the offers of a profligate Government and a licentious soldiery were unavailing; but still it was prudent in my gallant Friend not to bring together on the frontier, for an indefinite time and for no specific object, an immense native force, seeing that within a few miles they would be exposed to the injurious example of a soldiery free from all restraint, and constantly resorting to threats of actual violence towards their leaders. There were, therefore, political reasons for not keeping our troops as it were in immediate contact with such an enemy, and there were military reasons equally powerful.

It was, in the first place, impossible, if aggression were intended, to foresee at what point an invasion would be made. On the left bank of the Sutlej were many States belonging to the Punjaub, and some of the chiefs of those States men of doubtful fidelity. In those dominions on the left bank of the Sutlej are many forts of considerable size and strength. A force controlled by no Government, impelled by the fear of losing its pay, or the hope of extorting more, is not governed by ordinary considerations of prudence, like the armies of regular States; and if the army of the Punjaub meditated a sudden irruption into the British territory, it was difficult to foresee at what point the descent would be made. Between Ferozepore and Roopur there are not fewer than twenty fords available for the passage of troops; nor is it easy to ascertain their exact position, since, from the nature of the river, they are constantly changing. My gallant Friend thought, therefore, that true military policy recommended the course he has pursued, not that his whole army should be concentrated on the banks of the Sutlej, but that our territory should be guarded by a sufficient force stationed at Ferozepore and Ludiana. Seeing the superior force of cavalry in the army of the Punjaub, the desperate rashness of a licentious army not governed by the ordinary rules of conduct, it was within the limit of possibility that a dash might be made at Delhi, or some vital part of the Indian Empire. My gallant Friend,



therefore, most wisely and prudently, kept a considerable force at Umballah, seventy-six miles to the south-east from Loodiana, and a still larger body of troops in the neighbourhood of Delhi. This whole force was assembled by way of precaution against the possible attempts of the Lahore army; and it consisted in the whole of not fewer than thirty regiments of native infantry, of nine regiments of European infantry, of twelve regiments of native cavalry, and of three regiments of European cavalry. All this was quite consistent with forbearance on the part of the Governor General, and with his determination to be seduced by no temptation to aggression on the enemy.

It is quite clear that my gallant Friend the Governor General did take every precaution to ensure the safety of the British dominions in India, in case of sudden and unprovoked attack. In the early part of the year, at the time when he was occupied with his functions as Governor General, and when it was most material that he should perform them in conjunction with his Council at Calcutta; in a minute, dated on the 16th June, he submitted to the Council his opinion that our relations with the Court of Lahore became so doubtful, that, great as was the inconvenience of separating the Governor General and his Council, it was desirable, with reference exclusively to Indian interests, that he should proceed to the left bank of the Sutlej, in order that on the spot he might be enabled to give such directions as appeared necessary, and which, if given at the distance of a thousand miles, might be inappropriate. The unanimous opinion of the members of the Council was, that it was for the public interest that the Governor General should proceed to join the army; and, in conformity with this advice, in the month of October he took his departure for the left bank of the Sutlej. Up to an early period in December, the opinion of my gallant Friend (Sir Henry Hardinge) was, that there would be no irruption from the right bank of the Sutlej into the British territory. He felt confident that the Sikhs must be convinced that such an attempt could only end in signal defeat, and therefore that it would not be made. So far as he could reason from experience, he had a right to arrive at this conclusion. In

1843, the army of Lahore left the capital and advanced to the Sutlej; but after remonstrance on our part it retired again and abandoned the enterprise. In 1844, exactly the same conduct was observed; the Punjaub army, eager for pay, or for booty, if pay could not be obtained, and, instigated by the Government and the chiefs, appeared to contemplate an irruption; but, in 1844, as in 1843, the army withdrew to the interior. Accounts, however, reached my gallant Friend towards the end of November last, which led him to believe that an invasion of the British territory was seriously menaced. The House will find by the Papers recently presented by command of Her Majesty, that on the 20th November, Major Broadfoot addressed a letter to the Commander in Chief, and another to the Governor General to this effect:—

“ Governor-General's Agency, Nov. 20, 1845.

“ Sir—Since I had the honour of waiting on your Excellency to-day, I have received Lahore letters of the 18th instant (morning). During the night of the 17th, the chiefs had agreed on, and the Durbar had ordered in writing, the following plan of operations. The army was to be divided into seven divisions, one to remain at Lahore, and the rest to proceed against Roopur and our hills, Loodiana, Hureekee, Ferozepore, and Seinde, while one was to proceed to Peshawur; and a force under Rajah Golab Singh was to be sent to Attock.”

The decision then taken by the Lahore Durbar was, that four divisions were to be employed in an attack upon the British territory, but they were not to make a concentrated or simultaneous movement; and the policy of the course adopted by the Governor General was thus demonstrated. The Lahore army, in four divisions, was to make four separate attacks on different points along the river—the first division was to force the eastern extremity of the line; another to attack Loodiana; a third pass the river at Hureekee; and the fourth attack Ferozepore. Those divisions were to consist of about 8,000 men each. The House will see by reference to the Papers laid before them how difficult it was for any person, even the most experienced, to speculate on the decision to which the governing powers at Lahore might arrive. They will see, too, that the Ministers, or those who held the reins of government, spent their days in such continuous drunkenness and debauchery, that no resolution of theirs could be depended on.

An account written by the Agent at Lahore, to the Secretary to Government, dated Umballah, November 21st, founded on information received direct from Lahore, presents this picture of the councils of the Punjaub :—

"The Ranee (that is, the regent, the mother of the infant Maharajah) complained that whilst the troops were urging the march, they were still going home to their villages as fast as they got their pay; and Sirdar Sham Singh Attareewallah declared his belief that unless something was done to stop this, he would find himself on his way to Ferozepore with empty tents. The bait of money to be paid, and to accompany them was also offered, and at length the Durbar broke up at two P.M. Great consultations took place in the afternoon; but I know only one result, that the Ranee had to give her lover his formal dismissal, and that he (Rajah Lal Singh) actually went into the camp of the Sawars he is to command, and pitched his tent. What the Ranee says is quite true of the sepoys dispersing to their houses; the whole affair has so suddenly reached its present height, that many of the men themselves think it will come to nothing, and still more who had taken their departure do not believe it serious enough to go back. On the day after this scene took place, *i. e.* the 19th, the usual stream of sepoys, natives of the protected States, who had got their pay, poured across the Sutlej, at Hureekkee, on the way to their home."

There appears also an account of another conversation, in those Papers, which took place between the Rajah Lal Singh and Bhacee Ram Singh, one of the principal officers and advisers of the Lahore Government, and who seems to have been the only one of them in whom, from his character and wisdom, the slightest confidence could be placed. In a letter from Lahore, dated the 24th day of November, the following conversation was detailed: Bhacee Ram Singh, addressing Lal Singh, said—

"The English have interfered in no affairs of the Khalsa; what is the wisdom of your making religious war at the bidding of the soldiery? None of the nobles have discovered the real intentions of the English. The Governor General's agent, who is a steady friend, has written in the plainest terms, that the English Government desires only friendship like that of the late Maharajah Runjeet Singh; but that if any thing wrong is done by the Sikh army, the rulers of the kingdom will be held responsible, for rulers must account for the acts of their troops and subjects. Be cautious how you march to Hureekkee with the troops. The Rajah said, 'Bhacee Sahib, what can I do? if I remain, the soldiery seize me by the throat.'"

In a word, the councils of the Durbar seem to have been shifting from day to day, and no one could speculate with any degree of confidence as to the probable result.

On the 9th of December, the Governor General, thinking our relations with the Punjaub very critical, and that it was desirable to take every precaution against any sudden irrup-

tion, gave orders that the division of troops at Umballah, consisting of 7,500 men, should move towards the Sutlej. On December 11th, the very day on which the Lahore army crossed the Sutlej, the British and native troops of that division were on their march from Umballah to the frontier. The whole proceedings of the Governor General and the Commander-in-Chief, subsequently to that day, as well as before it, were characterized by the greatest prudence, skill, and foresight. From Umballah the troops marched to a place called Busean, where, owing to the prudent precautions of the Governor General, they found an ample supply of food and stores. It was resolved that a junction should be effected with the Loodiana division, and that it would be better to incur some risk at Loodiana, rather than forego the advantage of a junction with the Loodiana division of the army. Those troops advanced accordingly towards Ferozepore, and learned by the way that the army of Lahore, amounting to not less than 60,000 men, had crossed the river, and were prepared to attack the British army. The expectations of the Governor General were entirely justified by the result. There were in Ferozepore 7,500 men, 35 heavy guns in position, and 24 pieces of field artillery, in addition to the heavy ordnance. The army of Lahore shrunk from the attack of so formidable a post, and Ferozepore was entirely safe, according to the anticipations which had been entertained by the Governor General. The army of Lahore, not venturing to attack Ferozepore, determined to give battle to the British forces on their march from Umballah, and on the 18th of December made a sudden attack on them. On that day the troops had reached Moodkee, after having marched 150 miles by forced marches. The men were suffering severely from want of water, and from exhaustion, and yet such was their discipline and gallantry, that they repelled the whole of the attacking army, though greatly superior to them in number, defeating a force treble their amount, and succeeding in the capture of seventeen of their guns. The army of Lahore, thus repulsed by our forces advancing from Umballah, retired within very formidable entrenchments at Ferozeshah. Those entrenchments, consisting of strong breastworks, were in the

form of a parallelogram, of which the opposite faces were a mile and half a mile in length, respectively. In the face of those formidable works, protected by 150 guns of heavy calibre and excellent workmanship, and defended by near 60,000 men, the Governor General and the Commander-in-Chief determined to effect a junction with the division of the army which was stationed at Ferozepore. The troops advanced accordingly within three miles of the enemy's position, and manœuvred on his left flank; but the Commander-in-Chief having given previous notice to Sir J. Littler, made a march to his left, and on the 21st December effected a junction with the Ferozepore division, which thus gave an addition of 7,500 men. At this time there remained but three hours to sunset. It was resolved, however, to attack the position of the enemy. My gallant Friend (the Governor General) offered his services as second in command, services which were cheerfully and promptly accepted by the Commander-in-Chief. Determined not to wait till next morning, the instant they effected their junction with the division under Sir John Littler, the commanders resolved to make an attack upon the entrenched camp. The result, Sir, of that attack proved the valour of our European and Indian forces in a pre-eminent degree, and has entitled them to the warmest acknowledgments of this House and of the country. The night of the 21st December was one of the most memorable in the military annals of the British Empire. The enemy were well defended within strongly fortified entrenchments—their guns were served with the greatest precision, and told on our advancing columns with great effect. The right of the British army was led by the Commander-in-Chief, whilst the left centre was headed by Sir H. Hardinge. Our forces made an attack on the enemy's camp during the three hours which as yet remained of daylight; but they had not sufficient time to complete that victory, which was gloriously achieved on the following day. The British army, however, made good their attack, and occupied a part of the enemy's camp. In the middle of the night the camp took fire, and further conflict was for a time suspended in consequence; but as soon as it had ceased the army of Lahore brought forward their heavy

artillery, and poured a most destructive fire upon our troops. The details of those occurrences have been given with admirable clearness in the despatches of both commanders; but there have been private letters received which speak of them with less of formality, and perhaps give truer and more faithful accounts of these actions than the official documents. Perhaps the House will excuse me if I read an extract from a private letter from the Governor General to a member of his own family. The right hon. Baronet then read as follows:—

"The night of the 21st was the most extraordinary of my life. I bivouacked with the men, without food or covering, and our nights are bitter cold. A burning camp in our front, our brave fellows lying down under a heavy cannonade, which continued during the whole night, mixed with the wild cries of the Sikhs, our English hurrah, the tramp of men, and the groans of the dying. In this state, with a handful of men, who had carried the batteries the night before, I remained till morning, taking very short intervals of rest by lying down with various regiments in succession, to ascertain their temper, and revive their spirits."

My gallant Friend, as you see, spent that eventful night passing from regiment to regiment, cheering the men by his own example of constancy and courage—doing all that human means could do to ensure victory to our arms. "I found," my gallant Friend goes on to say—"I found myself again with my old friends of the 29th, 31st, 50th, and 9th, all in good heart"—regiments with which he had served in the Peninsula and with them that regiment which has earned immortal fame in the annals of the British army—Her Majesty's 80th Regiment—

"My answer to all and every man was, that we must fight it out, attack the enemy vigorously at daybreak, beat him, or die honourably in the field. The gallant old general, kindhearted, and heroically brave, entirely coincided with me."

Let the House observe how anxious my gallant Friend is to do justice to his companions in arms.

"During the night I occasionally called on our brave English soldiers to punish the Sikhs when they came too close and were impudent; and when morning broke we went at it in true English style. Gough was on the right. I placed myself, and dear little Arthur [his son] by my side, in the centre, about thirty yards in front of the men, to prevent their firing, and we drove the enemy without a halt from one extremity of the camp to the other, capturing thirty or forty guns as we went along, which fired at twenty paces from us, and were served obstinately. The brave men drew up in an excellent line, and cheered Gough and myself as we rode up the line, the regimental colours lowering to me as on parade. The mournful part is the heavy loss I have sustained in my officers. I

have had ten aides-de-camp *hors de combat*, five killed and five wounded. The fire of grape was very heavy from 100 pieces of cannon; the Sikh army, drilled by French officers, and the men the most warlike in India."

From my affectionate regard for this gallant man, I am proud to be enabled to exhibit him on such a night as that of the 21st of December—going through the camp—passing from regiment to regiment—keeping up the spirits of the men—encouraging them—animating their ardour—and having lost ten aides-de-camp out of twelve—placing his young son, a boy of seventeen or eighteen years of age, in the front of the line, in order that the British troops might be induced not to fire on the enemy, but drive them back by the force of the British bayonet. It was characteristic of the man to read these details. He had two sons present, one of whom was a civilian, and the other in the army. On the night of the 21st, he sent the civilian to the rear of the army, saying that his presence disturbed him, and that, if he refused to retire, he would send him away in arrest as a prisoner; but the presence, he said, of his younger son, an officer, whose duty called him to the field, only made the father more desperately resolute in the discharge of his duty. On the 22nd, after the battle was over, he took his eldest son, when visiting the sepoy and the wounded; and he showed them a Governor General of India who had lost his hand, and the son of a Governor General who had lost his foot, and endeavoured to console them in their sufferings by proving to them that men in the highest rank were exposed to the same casualties as themselves.

As I before observed, the accounts of all the military operations are given with admirable clearness in the despatches laid before the House. They must have been read with such attention by every Member of the House, that I will not weaken their effect by a minute reference to military details. The pride and satisfaction we must all derive from those gallant exploits are no doubt counterbalanced by deep regret for the loss of so many men of the highest distinction and promise. We have had the misfortune—the great misfortune—of losing that gallant officer, who on former occasions has so frequently distinguished himself—Sir Robert Sale.

He, Sir, has closed a long career of glory by that death to which I believe he himself looked forward and which he coveted—that death in the field which entitles me to say that, even in his own estimation, he was “*felix etiam opportunitate mortis*.” Sir, I do hope that this House will on no distant day mark their esteem and respect for the memory of Sir Robert Sale, by humbly representing to Her Majesty their unanimous wish that She may be pleased to record the gratitude of the country by the erection of a monument to Sir Robert Sale.

We have, Sir, also, to deplore the loss of Sir J. M'Caskill, to whom a brief but touching testimony of approbation is borne in the despatch of the Commander-in-Chief, as well as of one of the most eminent men in the civil and military services of India—Major Broadfoot. In that gentleman the highest confidence was placed by every one who came in contact with him. He obtained the applause of every civil and military authority in the country, and his prudence and skill as a civilian were only equalled by his ardour and bravery in the field. He was, I believe, the last of three brothers, all of whom have died in the service of their country on the field of battle. Major Broadfoot was present with Sir R. Sale during the siege of Jellalabad, and took a most conspicuous part in its defence. It is mournful, Sir, that we should have to deplore the loss in the same conflict of two gallant men so devoted to their country's service as Sir R. Sale and Major Broadfoot.

I shall not refer by name to officers of lower rank who have fallen in this conflict; for where all were so distinguished, it must be invidious to particularize; but whatever their rank, I can assure their surviving relatives that their country will do justice to their memory. I hope the Thanks of the House will be conveyed to all the men of every regiment engaged in this brilliant exploit, without exception. If there were occasions on which the reputation for valour of some regiments may appear not to have been upheld, considering their former services—their known gallantry—their severe losses—the remembrance of one moment's default is altogether obliterated by the recollection of their former eminent conduct, and of



the services they rendered on that very day. I am quite certain, Sir, that the men of Her Majesty's 62nd Regiment, of the 14th Native Infantry, and the other gallant native regiment on the flank of Her Majesty's 62nd Regiment, will not suffer in the estimation of the country; that the willing thanks of this House will be given, without exception, to all the regiments engaged in this action.

I hope, Sir, there will be an unanimous acquiescence in this Vote of Thanks to the European and Indian army. I trust I have said nothing that can provoke discussion or dissent in any quarter of the House. There is nothing in the Resolution to which any man—whatever may be his opinions as to the policy of the Governor General—can object. Let us on this occasion keep political and party differences altogether in the background. Let us all, without any division of political party, concur in bearing testimony to the brilliant services of men so worthy of the name of Englishmen. There never has been a greater example of extreme forbearance, strict justice, and a resolve to resist all the temptations to which the army was exposed—there never was a greater combination of those high qualities with the most brilliant talent and valour in defence of the British Empire in India. The gallantry of those who fell in that conflict will not be without its fruits. Their lives will not have been sacrificed in vain. The remembrance of their conduct constitutes one of the brightest possessions—one of the great defences of this country. When we reflect what can be effected by discipline and valour, such as was manifested by our countrymen on these memorable days, we feel that in a just cause our country must be victorious. The memory of those men who have fallen through their devotion to their country will long serve to animate the British army. It will make us proud of that name which we bear, and encourage us, if need be, to emulate their heroic exertions, and exhibit equal devotion, equal perseverance, equal courage, in the cause of our common country. (Great and enthusiastic cheering greeted the right hon. Baronet from all sides of the House in the progress, and at the conclusion, of his speech.) He moved the first of the following series of Resolutions:—

"That the Thanks of this House be given to the Right Honourable Lieutenant General Sir Henry Hardinge, Governor General of India, Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath, for the energy and ability with which he directed the military means at his disposal, to the repelling of the unprovoked invasion by the Sikh army of the dominions of the British Government, and of the Protected States upon the left bank of the Sutlej; and also, for the firmness and gallantry with which he directed the operations of that portion of the army under his immediate command, in the afternoon and night of December 21st, 1845, and on the morning of the 22nd, upon which occasion the enemy's defences were carried by storm, the greater part of their artillery captured, and their subsequent attempts to regain what they had lost repeatedly defeated.

"That the Thanks of this House be given to General Sir Hugh Gough, Baronet, Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath, Commander in Chief of the Forces in the East Indies, for the distinguished valour with which he directed and led the several attacks upon the enemy, and for the eminent services rendered by him in the battles of the 18th, 21st, and 22nd of December, 1845, displaying, as he did, in conjunction with the Governor General, a brilliant example to the troops, of perseverance and courage in critical circumstances, and of irresistible ardour in the several attacks made upon the enemy.

"That the Thanks of this House be given to Major General Sir Henry George Smith, Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath, to Major General Walter Raleigh Gilbert, and to Major General Sir John Hunter Littler, Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath, and to the several Officers, European and Native, under their Command, for the eminent Services rendered by them in the recent arduous and successful Operations.

"That the Thanks of this House be given to the Non-commissioned Officers and Private Soldiers, European and Native, for the Perseverance and Fortitude maintained by them at Moodkee on the 18th of December, 1845, and for the daring Valour with which they forced the Enemy's Intrenchments at Ferozeshah on the 21st and 22nd of December, captured most of his Guns, and finally compelled the Sikh Army, of greatly superior Numbers, to retire within their own Frontier.

"That this Resolution be signified to them by the Commanders of the several Corps."

"Ordered—That the said Resolutions be transmitted by Mr. Speaker to the Governor General of India, and that he be requested to communicate the same to the several Officers referred to therein."

## VICTORY OF ALIWAL.

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SIR R. PEEL spoke as follows: I am enabled, I will not say through the courtesy, but the public spirit and generous feeling of many Members who had Motions entitled to precedence over mine, to bring forward that of which I gave notice immediately on the receipt of the intelligence of our recent successes in India. That Motion, interposed as it is between discussions of great political importance, leading to much eager and even angry controversy, and to serious differences of opinion, will, I know from past experience, obtain the hearty and unanimous concurrence of this House. (Cheers from all sides.) That Motion will unite the representatives of a great Empire, proud of its military glory, in acknowledging in the first place the protecting hand of Almighty God, the giver of all victory, and in then expressing their exultation that new examples of heroism have maintained and exalted the military character of their country. (Cheers.) That Motion will enable us to pay a tribute of cordial and grateful acknowledgment to the generals, to the officers, and to the men, who have achieved signal victories in a far distant land. It will enable us also to mingle with the admiration of valour the expression of a manly but heartfelt sorrow for the loss of the "unreturning brave"—(cheers)—who have sacrificed, willingly sacrificed, their lives in the defence of their country's interests, and in the maintenance of their country's honour. (Much cheering.)

The Resolutions I shall propose will convey the thanks of this House, for splendid victories achieved within a very limited period, and within a very limited space; but I have felt it my duty not to incorporate our acknowledgments for these triumphs in a single resolution, but to reserve to each triumph the separate recognition so justly due to it. (Cheers.) It will have been my good fortune since the month of February, 1843, on five distinct occasions, to propose that the Thanks of the Commons of England should be conveyed to the armies, European and native, engaged in the service of the Crown in India. Including, indeed, the Vote on the glorious termination of the Chinese war, on six different occasions, will the Thanks of this House have been awarded. The repetition of these Votes tends in no degree to dim or disparage their value. (Cheers.) National gratitude must keep pace with national glory; and every fresh achievement adds new value to the reward we confer on skill and valour by the public acknowledgment of our gratitude. I intend, therefore, to submit two separate Motions: one, acknowledging the distinguished services of Sir Henry Smith, and of the division of the army under his command, for the battle of Aliwal; and the other, conveying an equal acknowledgment for the glorious services of the army under the immediate command of Sir Hugh Gough. (Cheers.)

Since the termination of those battles, which have already entitled the Indian army to the thanks of Parliament, (the battles of Moodkee and Ferozeshah,) the enemy with whom we had to contend, has displayed, through a series of operations, great military skill, and that character for undaunted bravery for which they are justly distinguished. Notwithstanding the reverses they met with on the 18th and 21st of December they appeared without delay on the banks of the Sutlej in considerable force, protected by a powerful artillery, near the ford of Hurekee. They established on the right bank of the river a large army, retaining possession of a bridge, over which they passed from the north bank of the Sutlej to the south; they established also a *tête de pont* on the left bank, and entrenched on that bank a force which by constant accessions at last included not less than 35,000 men, supported by about seventy pieces

of cannon. The artillery was of beautiful workmanship, and of heavy calibre. Not only did the enemy establish that large army and plant that artillery in the face of the British troops under Sir Hugh Gough ; but they despatched a force of not fewer than 20,000 men, conducted with the utmost skill and courage, towards the city of Loodiana, from which our forces had been at first withdrawn in order to assist in the battles of Moodkee and Ferozeshah. They adopted this operation, not merely for the purpose of occupying the city of Loodiana, but for the purpose of threatening to interrupt our communication with Delhi, and to intercept the arrival of our artillery by the road of Bussean. It was in order to prevent the success of this skilful and dangerous enterprise, that Sir Henry Smith was detached by Sir Hugh Gough and Sir Henry Hardinge—greatly weakening the force retained in front of the main body of the Sikh army. It was necessary, however, to do this in order to defeat the formidable body which crossed the river from Philloor in order to intercept our communication, and if possible to transfer the seat of war from the neighbourhood of Ferozepore to Loodiana. It was intended, before Sir Henry Smith attacked the army under the Sikh chief, composed of not less than 24,000 men, supported by about sixty pieces of artillery, that he should effect a junction with the British troops at Loodiana under Major Goldby, and with another body of men sent to reinforce him under Colonel Wheeler. The House is aware that the junction was ultimately effected; and that Sir Henry Smith was strengthened by the addition of the force from Loodiana, and of that under Colonel Wheeler. A desperate action was afterwards fought by the division under Sir Henry Smith, the result of which was the utter discomfiture of the enemy, the capture of all his guns, the disorganization of his whole army, and the flight of that army across the Sutlej after the severest loss. These operations are described with such precision—(hear, hear)—are detailed with such fullness and beautiful clearness—(cheers)—and must be so familiar to all whom I address—(hear, hear)—that I will not weaken the effect of their perusal by attempting to go over the same ground. The hand that held the pen, used it with the same success with which it had wielded the sword. (Ge-

neral cheering.) I have yet adverted only to the successes of Sir Henry Smith; now I will speak, and speak with confidence, and speak to his honour, of interruptions and checks to that success. There cannot but be vicissitudes in the operations of war; and that man is to be honoured, who recovers from temporary difficulties and disappointments—(cheers)—and thus adds brightness to the glory of his achievements. (Cheers.) I wish, therefore, for the purpose of exalting the merits and services of Sir Henry Smith, to present to the House some occurrences that preceded the battle in which he was so eminently successful—I wish to present, from Reports only recently received, an account of the difficulties and disappointments he encountered with the same spirit and constancy which he displayed in victory; and which, in my opinion, entitle him to equal applause. The great battle of Aliwal was fought on the 28th of January; but earlier in that month Sir Henry Smith had sustained what some might have considered a reverse. I allude to a period before his junction with Colonel Wheeler, and with the five regiments from Loodiana. In the absence of all intelligence he encountered the enemy; and but for his eminent skill and resolute valour, might have been exposed to serious hazard. Let me state in what manner he extricated himself. Writing to Sir Hugh Gough on the 21st, just after he had succeeded in relieving Loodiana, he said that he had accomplished that object, but under circumstances not quite so fortunate as he desired; and he used these expressions:—

“ When within a mile and a half to my left of Buddowal, moving parallel with my column (which was right in front ready to wheel into line), and evidently for the purpose of interrupting my advance, I saw the enemy. Nothing could be stronger for the enemy than the continued line of villages which were in his front.

“ He was moving by roads, while I was moving over very heavy sand-beds. He was in advance far beyond, on my right flank; so far did he extend, and so numerous did he show his infantry and guns, and so well chosen for him was the line of villages, that with my force he was not to be assailed; and he opened a furious cannonade of from thirty-five to forty guns of very large calibre, and, as usual, right well served. My object being to unite myself with the force from Loodiana, which every moment I expected to appear in sight—for it was nine o'clock—I moved parallel with the enemy, resolving to attack the moment the Loodiana troops reached me. He, however, so pressed upon me, that I opened in one body my eleven guns upon him with considerable effect, and moved up the 31st, and was preparing to form line upon this regiment, when

the enemy most rapidly formed a line of seven regiments, with their guns between, at right angles with the line I was about to attack, while a considerable force was moving round my right and front. Thus enveloped and overwhelmed by numbers, and such a superiority of guns, I had nothing for it but to throw back my line on its right, which represented a small line on the hypotenuse of a triangle."

That is to say, the two divisions of the enemy formed two sides of a triangle, Sir Henry Smith and his force being placed between them on a shorter line, and nearer the centre than the remaining side of the triangle. He goes on as follows:—

"The enemy thus outflanked me and my whole force. I therefore gradually withdrew my infantry in echelon of battalions, the cavalry in echelon of squadrons, in the direction of Loodiana, momentarily expecting to see the approach of that force—viz., one regiment of cavalry, five guns, and four regiments of infantry, when I would have made a vigorous attack. The ground was very deep and sandy, and therefore very difficult to move on. The enemy continued to move on as described for upwards of an hour, and until I knew the Loodiana force was moving not a musket was fired. Nothing could exceed the steadiness of the troops. The line was thrown back, under this cannonade, as if on parade, Native as well as British, and the movements of the cavalry, under Brigadier Cureton, were, without any exception, the most perfect thing I ever saw, and which I cannot describe."

So far from withholding this narrative of his extrication from his difficulties, I think it only adds to the proofs of his skill and valour, and illustrates his high character as a commander. (Cheers.) Having been disappointed in effecting his junction with the troops from Loodiana, and those expected to arrive under Colonel Wheeler, he extricated himself from his formidable embarrassment with consummate coolness and judgment. Instead of desponding under his temporary disappointment, he was able to direct all his energies to the entire discomfiture of the enemy only a few days afterwards. (Cheers.) Of the battle itself I will not speak; the victory was complete, and it has been so admirably described by the illustrious commander, that I will not weaken the effect of his narrative. (Cheers.) And is this victory his only title to our acknowledgment? What have been the services of this gallant Officer? These recent events have given new lustre to his preceding career. It is one of unusual distinction. Sir Henry Smith was at the capture of Monte Video—at the attack upon Buenos Ayres; he served during the first campaigns of the Peninsular war, from the battle of Vimiera to that of Corunna.

He was at the battles of Sabagal and Fuente d'Onor, at the sieges of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajos, at the battles of Salamanca, Vittoria, Orthes, the Pyrenees, and Toulouse. (Cheers.) He was at Washington and at New Orleans, and finally he was at Waterloo. (Much cheering.) What a series of noble services—(loud cheers)—and how rejoiced I am that there should be an opportunity, through this new and signal victory, of bringing before the gladdened eyes of a grateful country a long life of military exertion, and an unbroken series of military honours. (Cheers from all sides.) After he had achieved that success for which we are about to give him our special thanks—after he had driven back the enemy across the Sulej, he instantly returned to rejoin his commanding officer, Sir Hugh Gough. He arrived at head-quarters on the 8th February, two days before the decisive victory gained by the forces under Sir Hugh Gough and Sir Henry Hardinge. He took, therefore, a distinguished part in the battle of Sobraon. But for his services in the victory of the 28th of January, I propose that there should be a distinct and separate vote—distinct and separate from that which I shall recommend for that not more glorious, though perhaps yet more important and decisive achievement accomplished at a later date by the whole British army. (Cheers.) I say I will not weaken the effect of the recital of the particulars of that second battle and victory, as detailed in the despatches of the gallant officers in command, by attempting what must be in comparison a poor and inefficient narrative. (Hear, hear.) I will do the Members of this House, the fellow-countrymen of these distinguished officers, the justice to believe that they are familiar with all the details of these signal exploits. Let us not forget, in commemorating the valour of our own countrymen, to give due praise to the skill and bravery of our defeated enemy. After our successes over them on the 18th and 21st December, they so far recovered from their disasters, that, undaunted, they met on the field, after the lapse of a few weeks, the whole force of the British army. Sir Henry Hardinge, speaking of their conduct in the battle of Sobraon, says, "Such was the bravery of the enemy, that being defeated they walked away, and, in the middle of



the river, disdained to ask for quarter." (Hear, hear.) But I will not enter into particulars — for every man who hears me is master of the details of the battle fought on the 10th February; he is aware that the well-appointed army of the Sikhs suffered a complete and a signal discomfiture; that their loss was enormous; that, after the exhibition of great valour, they were driven across the Sutlej; and that the British army, crossing at the Sutlej near Ferozepore, as well as at the point where the battle was fought, united its forces and marched together towards the capital of the Sikh territory. All this was accomplished in a period not exceeding eight weeks from the day on which the first incursion of the enemy took place; and during that period of eight weeks the enemy was triumphantly defeated wherever he was encountered. (Cheers.) Every gun which the Sikhs had brought to bear on our troops was captured; and after a series of decisive victories, we now probably occupy the capital city of the Punjaub. I believe that not more than one-third of the whole force engaged consisted of Europeans, and the example which those Europeans set was worthy of being followed by the native soldiers. (Cheers.) They did follow it—(cheers)—and on every occasion during the four successive and desperate conflicts in which they were engaged, was the honour of the British name worthily sustained by the commanders, the officers, and the men. (Cheers.) The victory, this succession of victories, has been interrupted by no single failure; it was unsullied by any imputation on our arms and character. We have not been influenced by a grasping spirit of aggrandizement—we have simply repelled an attack made upon us in a time of profound peace—all national engagements on our part having been faithfully kept, there not having been a pretext, even in the shape of justifiable preparation and defence, for the aggression that was made upon us. Those Sikh chiefs with whom we have had communication since the defeat of the enemy, who disavow any participation in his perfidy, and profess to disapprove of it, have frankly acknowledged the object they had in view. By their powerful artillery, and by their formidable infantry and cavalry, they thought to overpower the two detachments of the British

forces stationed at the extremities of the frontier line—Ferozepore and Loodiana; having overpowered them, they intended to march at once to Delhi, and hoped by their success to shake the allegiance of our Indian soldiery. That was the avowed object they had in view. It was admitted that there was no excuse for this aggression from any proceedings on our part; we had been guilty of no breach of treaty, and had done nothing that could justify hostility. The same persons admitted also that they should derive consolation even from the failure of a rebellious and mutinous army—that the next best thing to victory would be a defeat, since it would lead to the dispersion and annihilation of a force which it was impossible to control. (Cheers.) For success so gained, and for triumph in a conflict so unprovoked, I think there will be but one universal and unanimous expression of gratitude within these walls. (Loud cheers from all sides.) There is much to adorn and nothing to sully our victory; and I do hope that now it has been achieved it will give lasting peace to India; that a general conviction will be felt of our power—a conviction of the superiority of British arms, that will ensure a long enjoyment of tranquillity to that country. I trust that this may be our last battle, and that hereafter we may be enabled to direct our undivided attention to the amelioration of the condition of our Indian fellow-subjects, and the improvement of the natural resources of our Indian Empire. (Cheers.) In that anticipation the House will, I am sure, permit me to refer to some circumstances which may well fill our hearts with joy and exultation. The two leaders of our victorious army, the Governor General and the Commander-in-Chief, have throughout these operations set an example of cordial concert and union—an utter forgetfulness of themselves, to which the happy result is greatly to be attributed. (Cheers.) All matters of punctilio were sacrificed, and Sir Henry Hardinge consented to serve as second in command. (Hear.) On the other hand, there was not a suggestion offered by Sir Henry Hardinge which was not thankfully accepted by Sir Hugh Gough. Hoping, as I have said, that this may be the last occasion on which I shall have to perform the gratifying duty of proposing a public acknowledgment for victory, and a public expression of admiration for the high

qualities of our illustrious countrymen, I will, with the permission of the House, refer to a document, not of a public character, that has been put into my hand since I entered the House this evening—it is a letter from Sir Hugh Gough, which was never intended to meet the public eye; but it does him so much honour, that I cannot refuse myself the pleasure of reading it. He says :—

“ It is now with pride and with pleasure I enclose you a copy of my despatch, detailing one of the most splendid and decisive victories upon record—the Waterloo of India. I have entered so fully both into detail and commendation in my despatch to the Governor General, that it would be impossible for me to enlarge upon a subject embracing the warmest feelings of my heart. Policy, however, precluded me publicly recording my sentiments on the splendid gallantry of our fallen foe, or to record the acts of heroism displayed, not only individually, but almost collectively, by the Sikh Sirdars and army; and I declare, were it not from a deep conviction that my country's good required the sacrifice, I could have wept to have witnessed the fearful slaughter of so devoted a body of men. (Loud cheers.) Never, in the page of military history, has the hand of an All-wise Being been so signally manifested: to Him, therefore, be the glory; we, as his instruments, feel the pride. (Loud cheers.) But I cannot pass over—I cannot too strongly record—facts which, whilst they add lustre to the native army, afford to me, as its head, inexpressible pride and pleasure. (Loud cheers.) For upwards of a month, when the two armies were close in front of one another, notwithstanding the numerous temptations held out to our sepoys by men of their own colour and religion; namely, greatly increased pay, from seven to twelve rupees a month, and immediate promotion, I had but three desertions from this large force. (Continued cheers.) Nor should I omit to mention, as a proof of the high state of discipline of this splendid army, that trade has been carried on unreservedly since we crossed the Sutlej in the several Sikh towns around which our divisions have been necessarily placed for the procuration of water, and the same confidence has been shown as though we were in one of our long-established provinces.” (Continued cheering).

The example set by two gallant commanders of disregarding military punctilio, and looking exclusively to their country's honour and to the safety of the army, told, as might naturally be expected, on those placed under their orders. Sir Hugh Gough speaks of an officer who joined only the night before the battle, and pays him a tribute which I am proud to mention. This officer (Brigadier Irvine) had made every exertion to join the army, in the hope of being placed in the prominent station to which by his rank he was entitled; and, as I have said, he arrived only the night before the battle. The command would naturally have devolved upon him,

but he declined to assume it, in order that all the credit might attach to the officer who in point of rank was inferior, but who had superintended the preparations for the coming action. While we are bestowing due praise on such devotion to public duty, let us not forget the example that had been set by the Governor General and Commander-in-Chief. That example had, no doubt, influenced the conduct of other brave and honourable men, who were willing to make a sacrifice, not of mere personal interest, for that they disregarded, but of that which was really dear to them, the opportunity of personal distinction. (Cheers.)

I am sure the House will permit me, among expressions of gratitude to the surviving conquerors, to mingle some of deep regret at the loss we have sustained. (Cheers.) On the former occasion I had to lament the sacrifice of life, and I met with universal and generous sympathy; I had to condole with the country on the death of that gallant officer Sir Robert Sale, who was known to most of us, and endeared to all who had intercourse with him, by the kindly frankness of his deportment. On this occasion I have to deplore the loss of several officers of the highest reputation, and the first I shall name is Sir Robert Dick. (Cheers.) I am confident that the House will permit me shortly to recite what is the extent of national gratitude due for the former services of this gallant officer. (Hear, hear.) He entered the service in 1800. He embarked with the 78th Regiment for Sicily in 1806, and was wounded in battle. He accompanied the expedition to Egypt, and was present at the taking of Alexandria. He embarked with the 42nd Regiment in 1809, and was again wounded at Fuente d'Onor. He commanded the second battalion of the 42nd Regiment at Ciudad Rodrigo. He was at the battle of Salamanca, at the storming of St. Michel, and was present during the siege of Burgos. In 1815 he was severely wounded, and, after a life of honour, he at last fell in the battle, for the happy result of which we are about to make our grateful acknowledgments.

I deeply regret that in the face of the House of Commons I cannot do justice to every officer and to every man who fell in this encounter, and sacrificed his life in his

country's service. Some limit, however, must be imposed on the mention of individual officers, and the least invidious limit is that of rank and standing in the army. Not outstepping that limit, I must deplore the loss of another gallant soldier. On the day which deprived us for ever of the services of Sir Robert Dick, there also fell Lieutenant Colonel Taylor of the 29th Regiment. The father of this gallant officer, leading into action the 20th Light Dragoons, of which he was Lieutenant Colonel, lost his life in the Peninsula. The father fell at Vimiera—the son met an equally glorious death at the battle of Sobraon. I will, with the permission of the House, briefly recapitulate the services of Lieutenant Colonel Taylor. He commanded the light company of the 20th Foot, in the expedition against Kalapore, in 1827-28; served on the frontier during the Canadian rebellion, where, in the successful attack of a village occupied by the rebels, he rendered an important service; commanded a brigade of infantry in the actions of the 18th, 21st, and 22nd of December, 1845, wherein he was wounded; commanded also the troops sent to keep up the communication between Sir Henry Smith and the main army, whilst the former was engaged in the operations which led to the battle of Aliwal; and a brigade of infantry at the battle of Sobraon, where he fell. His death is thus announced by Sir Hugh Gough:—

“The army has sustained a heavy loss by the death of Brigadier Taylor, a most able officer, and very worthy to have been at the head of Her Majesty's 20th regiment, by which he was beloved and respected.”

How many there are who have lost their sons and relatives in these conflicts I need not say; but I have been thrown of late into frequent and necessary intercourse with one, whose gallant son died on the field of battle in this encounter. It has been my duty, my painful duty in some respects, to hold constant communication with Lord Fitzroy Somerset, whose brave offspring, had he survived, would have supported the honour of his family, and transmitted to another generation the high character of his father. Lord Fitzroy Somerset himself has run an illustrious career. (Cheers.) He accompanied the Duke of Wellington throughout all the battles of the Peninsula, and was severely wounded at Waterloo. Had his son

survived, the satisfaction of Lord Fitzroy Somerset in contemplating the recent services of his former comrades would have been unalloyed. He has now to mingle with admiration of their valour the sorrows of a father for a painful and irreparable loss. If in mentioning the name of the gallant and lamented Somerset, I am transgressing the limit I proposed to observe, the services and character, and station of the father, his relation to the British army and to its illustrious Chief, will fully justify me in offering this, the best consolation to the wounded feelings of a father and a soldier. I wish I could do justice to my own feelings by naming many others scarcely less distinguished or less lamented; but the list is so numerous of those entitled to grateful remembrance, that I trust a reluctant silence will not be imputed to any want of a due sense of their claims and merits. (Cheers.)

When I review the names of those who have taken a distinguished part in these and other recent victories in India—the names of Sir Henry Hardinge, Sir Hugh Gough, Sir Henry Smith, Sir Charles Napier, Sir Robert Dick, and General Thackwell—(several Members here added the name of Gilbert)—I reflect with satisfaction and pride that these distinguished men received their military education under the auspices of the Duke of Wellington. (Much cheering.) It adds new lustre even to his immortal name, that his school has produced pupils who have so profited by his example. (Cheers.) There are officers not less eminent, who have not had the honour and advantage of serving under the Duke of Wellington; but on them his precepts and example have not been lost. Such men as Nott, and Pollock, and Gilbert, and other bright ornaments of the Indian army, have treasured up the memory of "Assaye," and the brilliant career of the Duke of Wellington throughout his Indian campaigns. His Indian Correspondence, his Comments on the Retreat of Colonel Monson, his Lessons on the Art of Indian Warfare, have exercised their just influence on those to whom, perhaps, his person is unknown.

It may be that at this very moment the Duke of Wellington is bestowing, in the House of Peers, the unstinted meed of his praise on these signal achievements, and is stamping an addi-

tional value even on the Thanks of Parliament, by bearing his high testimony to the skill and valour of those to whom they will be justly given.

With what conscious pride must he reflect on the number of gallant men distinguished in these Indian campaigns who have heretofore fought and bled under his command, and, after the lapse of many years, have now worthily followed his example ! And long after he shall have been gathered to his fathers, will that example instruct and animate the British army. It will teach them that success is ensured by the calm and dispassionate calculation of remote contingencies—by the preparation for all vicissitudes of fortune—by valour tempered according to the exigencies that require its display—now patient and enduring—now reckless and desperate. It will teach them fortitude under disappointment, and moderation in the hour of victory. The memory of the high qualities and the great deeds of the Duke of Wellington will be for ages a tower of defence to his country, inspiring her military councils with wisdom and justice, and guiding heroes that are yet unborn in the paths of glory. I conclude by moving—

“That the Thanks of this House be given to Major General Sir Henry George Smith, Knight Commander of the most honourable military Order of the Bath, for his skilful and meritorious conduct, when in command of the British troops employed against a large portion of the Sikh army, of greatly superior numbers ; and for the signal valour and judgment displayed by him in the battle of the 28th of January, when the enemy's force was totally defeated, and new lustre added to the reputation of the British arms.

“That the Thanks of this House be given to the several Officers, European and Native, under the command of Sir Henry Smith, for the distinguished services rendered by them at the battle of Aliwal.

“That this House doth highly approve of, and commend, the intrepidity and exemplary discipline displayed by the Non-commissioned Officers and Private Soldiers, European and Native, on the 28th of January, in their attack on the enemy's position, by which the Sikhs were completely routed, and driven in confusion across the Sutlej, with the loss of all their artillery and military equipment ; and that the same be signified to them by the commanders of the several corps, who are desired to thank them for their gallant behaviour.

“That, in requesting the Governor General of India to communicate these Resolutions to the several Officers referred to therein, this House desires to acknowledge the zeal and judgment evinced by the right hon. Lieutenant General Sir Henry Hardinge, Knight Grand Cross of the

Order of the Bath, Governor-General of India ; and also by General Sir Hugh Gough, Bart., Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath, Commander-in-Chief of the Forces in India, in supplying Major-General Sir Henry Smith with such reinforcements and military means as enabled him, under Divine Providence, to overcome all the obstacles thrown in his way by a brave and determined enemy."



## VICTORY OF SOBRAON.

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SIR R. PEEL thought that it would be unnecessary for him to trouble the House further than merely to propose the Resolutions, embodying a Vote of Thanks to Sir Hugh Gough and Sir Henry Hardinge, and the officers and soldiers serving under these distinguished generals. The gallant Officer (Sir De Lacy Evans) misunderstood him if he supposed that he (Sir R. Peel) intended to have made the slightest reflection on Sir Harry Smith, with respect to any loss in the baggage of his army; on the contrary, in what he had said he had been most desirous of paying an additional compliment to the gallant General for his most able and judicious conduct previously to the action of the 28th. Instead of implying any sort of blame, he intended to express his opinion that the movement of the troops previously to the battle of Aliwal had been conducted with the greatest skill and bravery. (Hear, hear.) He was fully aware that it was a matter of delicacy to allude in that House to the probable exercise of the prerogative of Her Majesty. He would not, however, let the opportunity pass of observing that Her Majesty had signified, within one hour after the receipt of the despatches, Her gracious intention of conferring the honour of the British Peerage on Sir Henry Hardinge and on Sir Hugh Gough. (Hear, hear.) He would take that opportunity of alluding to events which ought not to pass in silence. In a communication from Sir Henry Hardinge, which he received yesterday, that gallant

Officer bore testimony to the valour of the distinguished Prussian Prince and the officers who accompanied him in the campaign in India. That distinguished personage had left the army after the battle of Ferozepore, but on hearing that there was a probability of another engagement, returned to take part in it. The Prince is thus alluded to in the despatch of Sir Hugh Gough:—"We were in this battle again honoured with the presence of Prince Waldemar of Prussia, and the two noblemen in his suite, Counts Oriola and Greuben." Here, as at Moodkee and Ferozeshah, these distinguished visitors did not content themselves with a distant view of the action, but throughout it were to be seen in front wherever danger most urgently pressed. (Cheers.) He hoped also to be permitted to supply an omission which he had made in proposing the Motion, namely, in not doing sufficient honour to the distinguished services of Major General Gilbert. The highest testimony was borne to the distinguished services and merits of this gallant officer. (Hear, hear.) With respect to his conduct during the recent operations, he would refer to the words of Sir Hugh Gough, which were much better than any to which he could give utterance :—

"I want words to express my gratitude to Major General Gilbert. Not only have I to record that in this great fight all was achieved by him which, as Commander-in-Chief, I could desire to have executed; not only on this day was his division enabled, by his skill and courageous example, to triumph over obstacles from which a less ardent spirit would have recoiled as insurmountable; but since the hour in which our leading columns moved out of Umballah, I have found in the Major General an officer who has not merely carried out all my orders to the letter, but whose zeal and tact have enabled him in a hundred instances to perform valuable services in exact anticipation of my wishes. I beg explicitly to recommend him to your Excellency's special notice as a divisional commander of the highest merit." (Cheers.)

If he had inadvertently omitted to notice with the honour due to it the name of General Gilbert, he believed that he had now made ample compensation by reciting the highest testimony that could be borne to his conduct. (Hear, hear.) He should conclude with proposing the following Resolutions :—

"That the Thanks of this House be given to the Right Hon. Lieutenant-General Sir Henry Hardinge, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Honourable Military Order of the Bath, Governor General of India, for the judgment, energy, and ability with which the resources of the British Empire in India have been applied, in repelling the unjust and

unprovoked invasion of the British territory by the Sikh nation ; and for the valour and indefatigable exertions which he displayed on the 10th of February, at the battle of Sobraon, when, by the blessing of Almighty God, which we desire most humbly to acknowledge, this hostile and treacherous invasion was successfully defeated.

" That the Thanks of this House be given to General Sir Hugh Gough, Bart., Knight Grand Cross of the Most Honourable Military Order of the Bath, Commander-in-Chief of the Forces in India, for the signal ability and valour with which, upon the 10th of February, he directed and led the attack, when the enemy's entrenchments were stormed, their artillery captured, their army defeated and scattered, and the Punjaub laid open to the advance of our victorious troops.

" That the Thanks of this House be given to Major-General Sir Henry George Smith, Knight Commander of the Most Honourable Military Order of the Bath ; Major-General Walter Raleigh Gilbert, and Major General Sir Joseph Thackwell, Knight Commander of the Most Honourable Military Order of the Bath ; and to the other Officers, European and Native, for the distinguished services rendered by them in the eminently successful operations at the battle of Sobraon.

" That this House doth highly approve of and commend the invincible intrepidity, perseverance, and steady discipline displayed by the Non-commissioned Officers and Private Soldiers, European and Native, on the 10th of February, by which the glory of the British arms has been successfully maintained against a determined and greatly superior force ; and that the same be signified to them by the commanders of the several corps, who are desired to thank them for their gallant behaviour." (Cheers.)